REMARKS

The Office Action dated March 1, 2004 required restriction of the claims into two (2) claim Groups. In response, Applicants elect Group B, namely claims 11-12, 23-24, 35-37, 41-45, and 49.

However, Applicants do so with traverse. Applicants dispute the assertion by the Office that the two (2) claim Groups involve separate and distinct inventions. In addition, Applicants note that claims 46-48 merely represent an article of manufacture for the method claims 42-44. Accordingly, no separate search for these claims would be required.

According to M.P.E.P. §803, there are two criteria for a proper restriction requirement. First, the two inventions must be independent and distinct. In addition, there must be a serious burden on the Examiner if restriction is not required. Even if the first criterion has been met in the present case, which it has not, the second criterion has not been met.

Applicants assert that a search into prior art with regard to the invention of the different Groups is so related that separate significant search efforts should not be necessary. Accordingly, there is no serious burden on the Examiner to collectively examine the different claim Groups of the subject application. Therefore, restriction is not proper under M.P.E.P. §803.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the restriction requirement. It is also submitted that this application is now in good order for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner believe minor matters still remain that can be resolved in a telephone interview, the Examiner is urged to call Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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